CONTENTS

PART 2: POETRY

Editors' Introduction to Volume 2

THE DECADE covered by the prose works in this second volume, 1782 to 1793, was crucial in many respects for Thomas Paine. During those years, he explored the theoretical foundations of many of the intuitions or ideas he had first expounded most publicly in *Common Sense*. After 1791, his name became a synonym for revolution in England and America. From Jamaica to London, Tories hanged and burned his effigy and persecuted and imprisoned those who sold his works. His supporters drank to his name in every meeting or political occasion from Boston in the new United States to Sheffield in Great Britain and Calais in France. This period ended with his second most famous publication, the two parts of *Rights of Man*, which was followed by the draft of *Age of Reason*, Part I. Forced to flee Britain, Paine was granted French citizenship in August 1792, and in September he was elected to the French National Convention. He was soon active on the Committee of Constitution and embroiled in conflicts among French colleagues as to the direction the revolution should take. He ended up imprisoned as a "suspect" in the Luxembourg jail in Paris in December 1793.

Though he was an enemy to monarchies everywhere, this course of events took Paine by surprise. When the War of Independence ended, he continued to assist the new nation. He supported efforts to create its new fundamental structures, including (reluctantly) the new Federal Constitution of 1789, and fought to establish national norms of financial structures and taxation to establish credit worthiness and a secure national financial future. But Paine was more focused in these years on becoming a scientist-engineer building single-arch iron bridges. In 1785, partly to

recognize these aims, he was admitted to membership of the American Philosophical Society.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, Paine began to look back on the revolution and reflect on how it might be viewed by history. As early as 9 July 1777, he proposed in a letter to Benjamin Franklin to write a history of the revolution.[1] That plan never materialized, but in 1783 he first informed George Washington[2] that he was being considered for the role of historiographer to the Continent, a position that would have provided him with funding and access to resources, such as primary documents of Congress. Congress approved the position, but for some unknown reason it never came to fruition, and neither Paine nor anyone else would occupy the post. Nonetheless Paine always had the history of the revolution in mind and understood that its retelling, which was already becoming a contested narrative for the new nation, involved different perspectives.

Europe was never far from Paine's thoughts during the Revolutionary War. He returned there in 1781 at the invitation of John Laurens, the son of the former president of Congress, Henry Laurens,[3] who was at the time imprisoned in the Tower of London. John Laurens was tasked by Congress with traveling to France and negotiating an additional amount of money and supplies to see America through what it hoped would be the end of war. Laurens needed a secretary, so he asked Paine to accompany him, albeit without any salary. Paine did so eagerly, turning his attention to England specifically, and hoping that he could include in his history of the revolution a narrative of change in England. When he arrived in France, he was introduced to some French salons, thanks to Benjamin Franklin and Laurens, who both spoke French and were already well known among the Parisian elite. Paine brought with him copies of *Common Sense* and offered one to the aging statesman and philosopher Anne-Robert Jacques Turgot.[4]

During this trip to France, Paine likely also heard of the reputation of the historian Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal, who was to become renowned for, among other things, attempting an early history of the

1. Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), Pennsylvania entrepreneur, diplomat, and Paine's close friend. See 9 July 1777 to Benjamin Franklin, this ed., 4:30–32.

2. George Washington (1732–1799), commander in chief of the Continental Army and later the first president of the United States (1789–97).

3. Henry Laurens (1724–1792). John Laurens (1754–1782).

4. According to Nicolas Bonneville's (1760–1828) testimony, *Bulletin des amis de la vérité* (Imprimerie du Cercle social, no. 63, 3 March 1793). Anne-Robert Jacques Turgot, baron de l'Aulne (1727–1781), French politician and economist.

American Revolution.[5] Interest in the subject was widespread in the 1780s among all categories of European writers, from *philosophes* to Grub Street hacks and journalists. The issues of colonialism and of the colonization of America became a central topic in European intellectual circles with the appearance of Abbé Raynal's masterpiece, the *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des européens dans les deux Indes*, of which three editions were published in 1770, 1774, and 1780. The first was censored and soon became one of "the forbidden best-sellers of pre-revolutionary France."[6] Its anti-imperialist and antislavery passages had been written mostly by Denis Diderot and Jean Pechméja, not by Raynal.[7] Diderot also made substantial contributions to the chapters devoted to the American Revolution. These final sections were printed in 1781 as a separate book, *Révolution de l'Amérique*, which was quickly translated into English. Partly encouraged by French diplomats in the United States, Paine seized on this writing to offer his own view of the revolution to European readers. It was, he insisted, the first genuine antimonarchical revolution, which had attacked monarchy as such and not merely a dynasty. He defended the Franco-American alliance as well, and the French minister of foreign affairs Charles Gravier de Vergennes supported the translation of his essay.[8] The *Letter to the Abbé Raynal*—the first text in this volume—was widely read and made Paine even better known in France than had *Common Sense*, whose circulation had been limited. His answer to Raynal soon became a reference for French authors reflecting on the American Revolution.

The refutation of Raynal's *Révolution de l'Amérique* gave Paine the opportunity to expound upon his universalist vision of the American Revolution in Europe. Raynal's interpretation became the framework around which Paine formed his own history. He contested the Abbé on many facts of the revolution and persuasively argued for America's need to develop a robust copyright law to protect intellectual property. By the time Paine published his *Letter to the Abbé Raynal* in 1782, the War of Independence had come to an end and peace negotiations were in full swing. Paine hailed the signing of the 1783 peace treaty in his last article of the American

5. Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal (1713–1796), historian and noted specialist of colonial issues. He later refused to support the French Revolution.

6. See Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-sellers of Pre-revolutionary France* (Norton, 1995).

7. Denis Diderot (1713–1784), philosopher and encyclopedist. Jean-Joseph de Pechméja (1741–1785), author and intellectual.

8. Charles Gravier de Vergennes (1719–1787).

Crisis series. "The times that tried men's souls" were indeed "over," as the former mother country finally acknowledged the independence of the United States, at least on paper.

The somewhat precarious financial situation of America by the end of the war put the new nation on an unsteady footing. Unable to tax individual states, in debt to France and other nations, and awash with rapidly inflating counterfeit currency as well as its own devalued paper money, Congress faced a financial crisis, exacerbated by Continental soldiers who saw their pay dwindle to nearly nothing. The immediate solution Congress proposed was twofold. The first was to charter and create the Bank of North America; the second was to ask the states to pay an additional 5 percent tax on all goods they imported. These dire financial times made for strange bedfellows, as Paine, looking for work and trying to help fund his bridge project, agreed to write for the financier of the revolution, Robert Morris. Paine's six letters "to the Citizen of Rhode-Island" targeted the only state that obstinately refused to agree to Congress's 5 percent duty. His subsequent works on the absolute necessity of a central bank for financial stability and viability make the same consistent arguments: governments had a financial responsibility to their citizens; part of good governing was the establishment of financial protocols that served the common good as far as possible; and the instability of paper money was constantly to be kept in mind.

As one of the earliest writers who suggested the necessity for a new constitutional framework, both at state and national levels, Paine devoted most of his time to defending the kind of democracy he wished to see in the United States. His *Dissertations on Government* (1786) was a major contribution to the ongoing debate on the institutions in Pennsylvania, the most democratic state in the new nation. Less studied than his other major works, it should be viewed as an essential step in Paine's reflection on representative government. It is Paine's only attempt at explicitly defining sovereignty as "the power over which there is no controul, and which controuls all others."[9] Paine considered that sovereignty belonged to all people equally and could only be used in order to consent to a government defending their fundamental rights, including the rights to have a say in the affairs of the polity or to vote and to petition. Paine demonstrated that the only regime in which sovereignty could be exercised was a republic. He thus provided a theoretical basis for its conception.

9. This vol., 171–221.

This work was also a turning point because Paine came to terms with the difficulties of politics in a government based on a single assembly. The *Dissertations* testified to Paine's intellectual and political maturity. He came to realize the weight of partisanship in a unicameral legislature, and he questioned the opportunity of a constitutional reform. The occasion of this writing was the charter of the Bank of Pennsylvania. Paine considered that the contract between the state government and the bank was a legitimate and safe way of guaranteeing the funds it would manage. Those who lived off their land were opposed to the bank as populists, but the mechanics in the populated areas—a base which supported Paine—needed a bank to get loans. Paine still had in mind the British financial system and Parliament's management of the public funds, which he saw as disastrous.

Paine's nation-building plans were not only political and economic; they were also material and transatlantic. His iron bridge projects allowed him to build "pontifical relations" with two other nations in this period: England and France. Aided by Benjamin Franklin's recommendations, Paine first presented his model bridges to the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris. He came into contact with eminent men of all groups, philosophical and political, including Achille du Châtelet, Lafayette, and perhaps Condorcet and Brissot.[10] He also met frequently with Thomas Jefferson, then American ambassador in Paris.[11] All of them would play a major role in the French Revolution. In 1788, he traveled to London to get the approval of the Royal Society for his iron bridge. Working with the Walker Ironworks of Rotherham, Paine developed models of his bridges and earned a positive review and recommendation from the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris. Corresponding with men like Sir George Staunton and Sir Joseph Banks,[12] he immersed himself in enlightenment networks in pursuit of both political and scientific knowledge.

10. Achille François de Lascaris d'Urfé, marquis du Chastellet, known as du Châtelet (1759–1794), was an officer who took part in the American War of Independence and was a close friend of Condorcet. Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roche-Gilbert du Motier, marquis de Lafayette (1757–1834), fought with the American colonists during the Revolutionary War and played a key role in the early stages of the French Revolution. Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794), a major French thinker before and during the French Revolution. Jacques Pierre Brissot (1754–1793), a lawyer and writer, one of the main actors early in the French Revolution. Du Châtelet, Condorcet, and Brissot fell victims to the repression of the Montagnards.

11. Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), ambassador to France from May 1785 to August 1789, and later president of the United States (1801–9).

12. Sir George Leonard Staunton (1737–1801) and Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1820), botanists.

In England, he also published several texts about the political situation of Europe, exhorting Prime Minister William Pitt in his *Prospects on the Rubicon* to avoid war. Paine collaborated with Sampson Perry[13] and wrote for his *Argus*, one of the radical newspapers that would be so influential in building new networks of reformers in the early and mid-1790s. Paine used his quintessential American signature, Common Sense, to announce his return and stake his place in what he had long hoped for—a possible revolution in England. In England, he met Edmund Burke, Lord Fitzwilliam, and the Duke of Portland and was consulted on public affairs by Charles James Fox, Lord Lansdowne, Sir George Staunton, and Sir Joseph Banks, among others.[14] He continued to correspond with Jefferson. He visited his old mother in Thetford and traveled to different places, like Rotherham near Sheffield, and Manchester, to get the materials necessary to erect his iron bridge.

However, the evolution of the political situation in France, England, and Ireland soon led him to commit himself to the revolutions of the Old World as he had done in the New. It was also a moment of optimism for Paine, who supported the ratification of the Federal Constitution in the United States as well as the French Revolution, which seemed to usher in the new era of republics.

Indeed, the political, financial, and administrative crisis was coming to a head in France. Paine was thus soon caught again in the political turmoil of the age. Calonne's Assemblée des Notables of February 1787 could not offer a way out, and Paine felt "that a very extraordinary change is working itself in the minds of the people" of France.[15] However, he idealized Calonne's assembly as being "a fuller representation of the people than the Parliaments of England are." During the summer of 1787, the Paris Parliament was exiled to Troyes because of its opposition to French minister Loménie de Brienne's fiscal policy.[16] Paine's hopes were at this stage more wishful thinking, as no one yet anticipated the extent of the rupture of 1789. Yet

13. Sampson Perry (1747–1823), surgeon and journalist.

14. Edmund Burke (1729–1797), supporter of Americans during the Anglo-American crisis and then critic of the French Revolution in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). William Wentworth-Fitzwilliam (1748–1833), Whig politician. William Henry Cavendish Cavendish-Bentinck, 3rd Duke of Portland (1738–1809). Charles James Fox (1749–1806), leading Whig politician. William Petty Fitzmaurice, 1st Marquess of Lansdowne, Earl of Shelburne (1737–1805), former prime minister.

15. *Prospects on the Rubicon*, this vol., 268–302. Charles Alexandre de Calonne (1734–1802), comptroller general of finance.

16. Étienne Charles de Loménie de Brienne (1727–1794).

he sensed that France was on the verge of a change of some kind, or about to "cross the Rubicon," as he wrote.

Paine had not lost sight of the United States, and he followed the debate on the ratification of the Federal Constitution of 1787. He regularly discussed this topic with English-speaking French intellectuals. He also corresponded with Jefferson, who was then in Paris as the French minister plenipotentiary of the United States. These letters would later constitute a vital source of information in the first part of *Rights of Man*, notably relating to events Paine had missed during his trips across the Channel. Paine soon met Condorcet, Morellet, and La Rochefoucauld d'Enville, who had read the translation of his *Letter to the Abbé Raynal*.[17] He then began a "sustained engagement with an intellectual community in London and in Paris."[18] Even if he did not publish any substantial writing between September 1787 and March 1791, he prepared several drafts that made up the material for the publication of the first part of *Rights of Man*. As Lafayette's testimony in January 1790 revealed,[19] Paine started to write a history of the events in France that he intended for George Washington, to whom *Rights of Man*, Part I, would be dedicated. In his diary entry of 5 January 1790, Gouverneur Morris stated that Paine had completed a comparison of English and French finances,[20] which Paine inserted in the "Miscellaneous Chapter." *Rights of Man* was therefore partly based on materials prepared ahead of the publication of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

Paine welcomed the beginning of the French Revolution in May 1789 with great enthusiasm, seeing it as the realization of his predictions in the *Letter to the Abbé Raynal*. He was immediately part of the movement that supported the revolution in England. Lafayette gave Paine one of the Bastille keys offered by the National Constituent Assembly to Washington as an homage to the American Revolution. Paine made short visits to France in 1790. In November 1790, Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* launched a counterrevolutionary campaign against English

17. André Morellet (1727–1819), a close friend of Brienne and translator of Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Louis-Alexandre de la Rochefoucauld d'Enville, duc de la Rochefoucauld (1743–1792), a French nobleman who supported the American Revolution and was a friend of Benjamin Franklin.

18. Seth Cotlar, "Conclusion," in *Paine and Jefferson in the Age of Revolutions*, ed. Simon P. Newman and Peter S. Onuf (University of Virginia Press, 2013), 287.

19. Gilbert du Motier, marquis de La Fayette, *Mémoires, correspondances et manuscrits du général La Fayette*, 2 vols. (H. Fournier aîné, 1837–38), 2:440.

20. Gouverneur Morris, *A Diary of the French Revolution*, ed. Beatrix Cary Davenport, 2 vols. (George G. Harrap, 1939), 1:358.

supporters of the French Revolution. Paine immediately used the material he had already gathered to write *Rights of Man*, Part I, in reply to Burke's book. In March 1791, *Rights of Man*, Part I, was published in London by J. S. Jordan.

The so-called Burke-Paine controversy—there was much else being contended for—was the major debate of the 1790s, indeed perhaps the most extensive political debate of its type in English. It has remained seminal to discussions about the universal value of human rights and the worth and meaning of democracy. Neither key author systematically refuted the other, and both distorted the other's words in support of their own conclusions. Paine focused on what he viewed as Burke's essential ground, the idea that precedent and authority alone were legitimate bases for a government. He thus elaborated what some see as a neo-Lockean theory against Burke's neo-Filmerian positions.[21] Paine pitted his transformative conception of time against Burke's static idea of it. In his view, monarchy always looked backward, and only republican governments could engage with the present and see it as progressing into a superior future. A great part of the discussion hinged on an evolving political vocabulary, with key words like "constitution," "convention," and "revolution" shifting in meaning. Paine often extended what he had written in previous works such as *Four Letters on Interesting Subjects*, where he distinguished "constitution" from "government," since a constitution should be a written document or "charter" agreed on by the people as a whole, meaning that Britain had no constitution.

Rights of Man, Part I, was an enormous success and greatly contributed to the development of English radical political societies and a surging demand for political, social, and economic reform. It was also widely read in Ireland and in America, where it provoked an important debate on the nature of the American government between Federalists and the nascent Republican party. It was also read in France, first in English, then in French after its translation in April 1791.

Burke indirectly replied to Paine in his *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* (August 1791). Although Burke claimed he was not going "to refute" Paine, he went on opposing Paine's views.[22] The constituting power of the people was not a permanent right in Burke's system, and therefore a revolution, if such an event distinct from a reform could exist, could not

21. John Locke (1632–1704) refuted Robert Filmer (1588–1653), largely on the issue of the divine right of kings.

22. Edmund Burke, *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, 9 vols. (Clarendon, 1981–97), 4:439.

alter the form of government. In the second part of *Rights of Man*, Paine attacked Burke implicitly, whereas in *Letter Addressed to the Addressers* (September 1792) he was more straightforward. To some extent, the debate between the two main protagonists petered out, but dozens of other writings had been published by then. The original controversy evolved into a general political battlefield in Britain and beyond, and a debate over the politics appropriate to a wealthy but highly unequal modern commercial society, rather than only Burke's and Paine's principles. Paine innovated more in Part II than in Part I of *Rights of Man*, with his plans to reform the poor laws and set up a welfare state to alleviate or even eliminate poverty in England. These novel and striking proposed innovations drew on a long republican and utopian tradition of addressing poverty.[23] They were also partly inspired by the reflections in the French committees of the Constituent Assembly to relieve poverty.[24]

By the time *Rights of Man*, Part II, was published in February 1792, Paine was even more deeply involved in French politics. A few months after Part I appeared, Louis XVI's attempt to flee abroad and his arrest in Varennes on 21 June 1791 led Paine to write his *Avis aux français*.[25] Whereas Paine clearly showed his hostility toward monarchy and used his usual anti-monarchical arsenal, he did not call for a republican regime to be introduced immediately. Paine then became more closely associated with the group who founded the short-lived newspaper *Le Républicain*, to

23. For British debates, see Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty? A Historical Debate* (Profile Books, 2004); and Gregory Claeys, "Republicanism, Commerce and the Origins of Modern Social Theory in Britain, 1796–1805," *Journal of Modern History* 66 (1994), 249–90. For further commentary, see J. W. Seaman, "Thomas Paine: Ransom, Civil Peace, and the Natural Right to Welfare," *Political Theory* 16 (1988), 120–42; Adrian Little, "The Politics of Compensation: Tom Paine's *Agrarian Justice* and Liberal Egalitarianism," *Contemporary Politics* 5 (1999), 63–73; Robert Lamb, "Liberty, Equality, and the Boundaries of Ownership: Thomas Paine's Theory of Property," *Review of Politics* 72 (2010), 483–511; Mark Philp, "Thomas Paine and Socioeconomic Rights," *French History* 33 (2015), 554–71; Elizabeth Anderson, "Thomas Paine's *Agrarian Justice* and the Origins of Social Insurance," in *Ten Neglected Classics of Philosophy*, ed. Eric Schliesser (Oxford University Press, 2016), 55–83; and Alberto Tena Camporesi, "Rethinking Thomas Paine and the Origins of Basic Income Proposals," *History of Political Economy* 55 (2023), 77–102.

24. On the French background, see Yannick Bosc, "Paine et Condorcet pour refonder la solidarité? À propos de la fin de la pauvreté? Un débat historique, de Gareth Stedman Jones," *Mouvements* 64 (2010), 129–35; Yannick Bosc, "La république de Thomas Paine: Droit à l'existence et allocation universelle," in *Républiques et républicanismes: Les cheminements de la liberté*, ed. Olivier Christin (Éditions le bord de l'eau, 2019), 115–30; Laurent Geffroy, "Penser le revenu garanti avec Thomas Paine," *Mouvements* 73 (2013), 19–22; Éric Dacheux and Daniel Goujon, "Allocation universelle et économie solidaire: Une alliance au nom de la démocratie," *Mouvements* 73 (2013), 130–37.

25. Improperly called "Republican Proclamation" in previous collections of his works.

which he contributed. The other authors of the newspaper—Condorcet, Brissot, and Du Châtelet—did not agree on what precisely a new republican regime for France should be. Paine's conversion to "French republicanism" was not as sudden as it seemed, since he had already begun to think about this issue before Varennes. He had drafted a manuscript to answer a series of questions he had received in May 1791. Paine then underlined the inconsistency between keeping a monarch in the new Constitution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789. Yet, one year later, when this writing was published, the king was still there, as he had been confirmed as the head of the executive in September 1791 by the Constituent Assembly.

Paine left France on 10 July 1791 and returned on 13 September 1792. His *Réponse à quatre questions* [*Answer to Four Questions*] was published between May and July, while he was still in Britain. This absence means that Paine did not witness the series of events in France that led to the insurrection of 10 August 1792. Paine chose to ignore the fact that Lafayette's reputation had been impaired by the events of 17 July 1791 on the Champ-de-Mars, when Lafayette ordered the National Guard to open fire on a crowd who supported the Cordeliers' petition favoring the abolition of monarchy. Despite this event and the anti-Lafayette campaign in France, Paine dedicated the second part of *Rights of Man* to the hero of the American War of Independence. The campaign against Lafayette in France, which was headed first by Marat and Robespierre[26] and later by Brissot, became even more widespread in the spring of 1792, and culminated in August with Lafayette's indictment, botched coup, and treason. In the first edition of the translation by Lanthenas of *Rights of Man*, Part II, the dedication to Lafayette was suppressed.[27] If the preface was ill-timed in the French context, it could be understood differently on the other side of the Channel. The second part of *Rights of Man* was first and foremost aimed at a British audience. Dedicating the book to a Frenchman who was perceived to be a supporter of parliamentary monarchy was a means for Paine of making his model acceptable, hence the quite cryptic justification Paine inserted in the dedication.

Soon after *Rights of Man*, Part II, was published, the political reaction in England against political societies and the supporters of the French Revolution reached Paine and made him a major target of the Pitt government. Threatened with arrest and certain conviction, Paine had to flee

26. Jean-Paul Marat (1743–1793) and Maximilien Robespierre (1758–1794) were key figures in the French Revolution.

27. François Xavier Lanthenas (1754–1799), doctor and translator who was close with Paine.

England and take shelter in France. Yet he had missed the crucial event that triggered the major political reshuffling and alliances in France: 10 August 1792. The people of Paris, the Fédérés of Brittany and Provence, and the Commune de Paris were supported by Robespierre and future Montagnards, whereas future Girondins were frightened by the popular insurrection that put an end to the French royalty.[28] Paine's French friends prepared his return to France and planned to have him elected in the future Convention. He was indeed elected in several départements in the early days of September 1792, in Pas-de-Calais, Oise, Aisne, and Puy-de-Dôme, which was also the département of Paine's friend Bancal.[29] When Paine landed in France again on 13 September, he was welcomed by an enthusiastic crowd. He was then taken to the Hôtel de Calais and finally to the Town Hall, where he was offered a cockade under "the bust of Mirabeau, and the colors of France, England and America united."[30]

Paine arrived in Paris on 16 September. Five days later, he sat in the Convention to vote to abolish monarchy in France. He reinforced his contacts with some of the Girondins, and together they revived the rhetoric of the republican moment of summer 1791. As a representative, Paine was elected a member of the Committee of Constitution and took part in the debate on the fate of Louis XVI. Gradually Paine became embroiled in the political divisions inside the Convention between Girondins and Montagnards. On 11 October 1792, the day the constitutional committee was appointed, an article entitled *Essai anti-monarchique à l'usage des nouveaux républicains* was published in the *Feuille villageoise*, whose readership was common people in the French countryside. Working with Condorcet, Paine had a major hand in this article. Monarchy appeared as

28. The Fédérés were volunteers who came to Paris to be sent to the French borders against the Prussian and Austrian armies. The Commune de Paris was the municipality elected by the assemblées primaires in the sections of Paris. "Girondin" and "Montagnard" were not party denominations but represented more or less the "right" and the "left" of the new assembly.

29. Jean Henri Bancal "des Issarts" (1750–1826), a close associate of Paine, the Rolands, and the Girondins.

30. *Letter from Thomas Paine, to Mr. Secretary Dundas, Complaining of an Insult Offered to Him, by the Inferior Officers under Government, Belonging to the Custom-House at Dover: To Which Are Added, Two Letters from Calais; one from Monsieur Achilles Audibert, Confirming the Above Insult; and the Other Giving the Particulars of Mr. Paine's Reception at Calais* (W. Holland, 1792), 13–14. Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau (1749–1791), was elected to the States General and in favor of reforms, including the abolition of the slave trade. He encouraged Louis XVI to accept the Constitution of 1791 and was still a popular figure in 1792. His remains were transferred to the Panthéon but were removed in 1794, when his royalist leanings were uncovered.

incompatible with "common sense." France had become a republic, but the fate of the French monarch still had to be decided.

The discovery of Louis XVI's secret iron chest (*armoire de fer*) containing his correspondence with foreign monarchs revealed that the king intended to set up a coalition of powers against France. Paine immediately reacted, as he had done in June 1791, but this time he was not the first to do so. He sent a letter to the Convention to express his views on the need to organize the trial of the king. During the discussions in the Convention, which he partly followed with the help of Bancal, Condorcet, and Danton,[31] who all sat in the Convention and were sufficiently fluent in English to translate texts and speeches for him, Paine stuck to his position that the trial should be first and foremost an indictment of monarchy. His speeches all served this goal, and his original solution—exiling the king to the United States—was appreciated by many other Conventionnels who voted against the death sentence and who referred to Paine as their guide.

In November 1792, he played an important role in the creation of the Society of the Friends of the Rights of Man (Société des Amis des Droits de l'Homme) in Paris. This society, mainly composed of British and American republicans, was instrumental in developing a transnational revolutionary network between France, England, and Ireland to prepare a revolution in the British Isles. Paine also acted as an adviser for English and Irish issues for the minister of foreign affairs.

Almost from the beginning of the Convention, Paine was embroiled in French partisan politics. He was seen as a close friend of the Girondins, especially after the constitutional plan was presented on 15 February 1793 before the Convention by Condorcet in the name of the committee in which Paine had taken part. Paine's exact share in the work of the committee is hard to assess given the lack of material. Only assumptions can be made by looking into the project and Condorcet's speech. In spring 1793, Paine wrote to Danton to express his concerns about the turn the French Revolution was taking. He balked at "the spirit of denounciation," which was widespread, and he feared the reactions of the Parisian people.[32]

However, he was spared by the wave of arrests following the "Revolution of May 31–June 2, 1793," perhaps because Danton advised him not to go the Convention on those days; but he was publicly criticized in the Convention on 18 June by two delegates of the Pas-de-Calais. No specific charge was leveled at Paine in this address. He retrospectively said that this

31. Georges-Jacques Danton (1759–1794), a key figure of the French Revolution, quite close to Robespierre but arrested and guillotined for his involvement with the Indulgents.

32. This ed., 4:625–31.

denunciation announced his future arrest, but he was protected by Saint-Just, who presented the report of the Committee of Public Safety (CPS) about the members of the Convention arrested on June 2.[33] Saint-Just pleaded that Paine was only a victim of the Girondins who had "deceived" him, which was the same narrative provided by Vadier in January 1794, when he rebutted a group of American petitioners who requested Paine's release from jail.[34] A collection of Paine's writings in French was published in the autumn of 1793. The review of the collection, published in the moderate *Mercure français*, pointed to Paine's insufficient knowledge of the French language, which allegedly precluded his understanding of French politics. It proved to be the second type of enduring myth invented to get rid of Paine when his views proved too embarrassing. The same kind of contempt was used after Thermidor when Antoine-Clair Thibaudeau asked for Paine's rehabilitation in the Convention in 1794.[35] Therefore,

33. Louis-Antoine Léon de Saint-Just (1767–1794), close to Robespierre. The CPS was created 6 April 1793 by the Convention after General Dumouriez's treasonous defection to the Austrians after expressing deep dissatisfaction with the Convention, which compromised the situation of the French armies. Proposed by Girondin Maximin Isnard (1755–1825), Georges Danton, and Bertrand Barère (both later considered as Montagnards), the CPS was a parliamentary committee composed of members elected by the assembly and was subject to renewal at any time. Its purpose was to take urgent measures of "public safety," in particular relating to war, diplomacy, and the organization and direction of the French armies. These measures had to be confirmed by the Convention to have the force of law. This is why the CPS regularly presented reports to the assembly. The CPS was renewed several times. The original CPS in April 1793 was composed of nine members. In the year II (September 1793–94) they were twelve, then eleven. Barère, Jacques-Nicolas Billaud-Varenne (1756–1819), Lazare Carnot (1753–1823), Jean-Marie Collot d'Herbois (1749–1796), Georges Auguste Couthon (1755–1794), Jean-Bon Saint-André (1749–1813), Jean-Baptiste Lindet (1746–1825), Prieur de la Marne (1756–1827), Prieur de la Côte d'Or (1763–1832), Robespierre, and Saint-Just formed what the historians have called the Great Committee in year II. The CPS was not a government or a substitute to the executive but an emanation of the legislative power. It corresponded with representatives sent to the armies and in the provinces, with local authorities, but also with popular societies and local committees of surveillance responsible for implementing revolutionary measures. Contrary to the Thermidorean legend, the CPS never had dictatorial powers since it was under the authority of the whole Convention. Another committee, the Committee of General Security (CGS), was established in October 1792. Its duty was to take provisional measures of "police and surveillance" against enemies of the Republic and to arrest "suspects." The two committees were supposed to work together but strong divisions among their members provoked endless quarrels throughout their existence. Both were suppressed at the end of the Convention in October 1795.

34. Marc-Guillaume-Alexis Vadier (1736–1828) was elected to the Convention in 1792. From 14 September 1793 until Thermidor, he was a member of the CGS and played a central role in revolutionary surveillance and police.

35. Antoine-Clair Thibaudeau (1765–1854) presided over the Convention in March 1795. He was later elected to the Council of the Five Hundred and nominated as prefect under Napoleon I.

the figure of the foreigner, ignorant of the French language, and deluded by Girondins, was born and reappears even in present-day historiography.

After the recall of the twenty-two Girondin representatives on 2 June 1793, Paine almost ceased to appear in the Convention, although he still collaborated with Barère, an important member of the Committee of Public Safety.[36] By October 1793, Paine had relinquished his hope of seeing republican principles of freedom exported to other European countries. As he was still a member of the Convention, he escaped the 10 October decree that ordered the arrest of all English residents. He was also a French citizen. On 25 December, all the "foreigners" born in countries at war with the French Republic were put under surveillance as "suspects," and some were arrested. Born in England, Thomas Paine was now under threat. During the debates on the bill, Bourdon (de l'Oise) attacked Paine for his insufficient "patriotism" and censured him for his failure to attend the Convention sessions since the summer of 1793 and the arrest of the Brissotins.[37] Paine was jailed, together with Anacharsis Cloots, a Prussian baron, also a member of the Convention.[38] The order was issued by the Committee of General Security on 27 December. On 28 December, Paine's room was searched and his papers examined in the presence of Joel Barlow and Achille Audibert, who had welcomed him in Calais the year before. The commissioners, relying on their translator, Dessous, wrote in their report that Paine's papers contained nothing "suspect" and did not require sealing.[39] Paine was to remain in jail for eleven months.

Paine's personal quest to secure a position as an author, engineer, and scientist was indeed unsuccessful, but the French Revolution created the conditions for his literary sparks to ignite the world once again. America had dealt the first blow to monarchy and aristocracy; France gave the deathblow. Paine used his fierce pen again and produced his greatest works in the midst of the revolutionary age.

36. Bertrand Barère (1755–1841) was a lawyer and a major figure in the French Revolution. Elected to the Constituent Assembly and then to the Convention, he appeared as a moderate between the Brissotins and Montagnards.

37. *Réimpression de l'ancien Moniteur*, 32 vols. (Plon, 1858–1870), 19:54. François-Louis Bourdon (de l'Oise) (1758–1798), a Montagnard.

38. Anacharsis Cloots (1755–1794). Among the foreigners offered French citizenship in 1792, he was elected to the Convention. An avowed enemy of the church and clergy, or "défanatiseur," he was sent to the Tribunal Révolutionnaire with the Exagérés and executed on 24 March 1794.

39. Archives Nationales, F7/4774/61 dr. 3. This ed., 1:229–31.